welcome

We love *The Transformers*! It's true! Why else would we have all travelled all this way to be here today? So we can get together with fellow fans to chat about our favourite Robots in Disguise. Heck, even some of us have been on the telly talking about them! We are lucky enough to be part of one of the friendliest and most creative fan communities in the world -- which is pretty much what this comic strip behemoth represents! This momentous collaboration of British Transformers fans is a true testament to the sheer talent, loyalty and dedication that's out there: from fanzines (*Junk Files, Pioneer*) to web sites (*The Hub*) to the first-ever Transformers novel (*Eugenesis*) to all the interlocking fan-fiction out there and back again! Hopefully this magazine shows you what we fans are capable of, and that it might inspire you to tap into your own creative talents and write or draw *Transformers*. Enjoy our stories, enjoy the show, and enjoy interacting with people who are just as crazy about Transformers as you are!

we all need someone

— Graham Thomson
graham-thomson@excite.com

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transforce 2001

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"I STILL REMEMBER THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM."

OH...

"IT'S NOT SOMETHING ANY-ONE CAN EASILY FORGET"

FELL ON BLACK DAYS

YOU'VE GOTTA BE KIDDING ME!

TRANSMASTERS UK PRESENTS RODIMUS PRIME IN "FELL ON BLACK DAYS" SCRIPT MARK STEVENSON ARTWORK NICK ROCHE LETTERS GRAHAM THOMSON

"BECAUSE FOR MOST BEINGS..."

UNFORTUNATELY NOT, HOT ROD.

"...IT'S THE LAST THING THEY'LL EVER SEE."

UNLESS MY DETECTIVE SKILLS ARE WAY OFF THE MARK...

CYBERTRON, 1991.

THAT'S UNICRON!!!

"THE FIRST COMING OF THE CHAOS-BRINGER, A NEW DEFINITION OF THE WORD 'ARMAGEDDON.' WE WERE TOTALLY UNPREPARED. WHO WOULDN'T BE?"

YEEEHAAA!!!

"AH, YOUTHFUL EXUBERANCE. AFTER THE INITIAL SHOCK OF SEEING UNICRON, WE POURED EVERYTHING WE COULD INTO A COUNTERATTACK."

"IT WASN'T ENOUGH."

"THERE WAS A LEGEND THAT, IF UNITED, THE CHILDREN OF PRIMUS COULD STOP UNICRON. IF THAT FIGURE HAD TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT THE ENTIRE CYBERTRONIAN EMPIRE..."
"... I'D STILL HAVE SAID IT WAS SLIGHTLY OPTIMISTIC."
UNHH! SCORPONOK!
THIS CAN'T BE REAL! IT'S UNSTOPPABLE. WE'RE LOSING TROOPS FAST, AND MOST OF OUR BEST WARRIORS ARE IN STASIS ABOARD --
-- THE ARK!
LOOKS LIKE OL GRIMLOCK CAME THROUGH AFTER ALL!
REINFORCEMENTS AT LAST! HEY, WE MIGHT EVEN GET OUT OF THIS ALI--
MMFF!
I SHOULDN'T BE SO CONFIDENT, AUTOBOT...

THIS WRETCHED PLANET, AND EVERY TRANSFORMER ON IT, WILL DIE. AND I DON'T INTEND TO HANG AROUND TO SEE IT!
UHK!
THE ARK HAS CRASHED SOMEWHERE NEAR HERE. THOUGH DAMAGED, IT IS STILL MY BEST OPTION FOR ESCAPING.
TO REACH IT, I WILL REQUIRE YOUR HOVERSCOOTER.
HOWEVER, I HAVE NO USE FOR ITS RIDER.
FIREBOLT! RUN!!
WHO THE FRAG ARE YOU?
...
OH. IT'S YOU.
ARE WE CURSED, RODIMUS PRIME? CAN I NOT GO ANYWHERE WITHOUT YOU FOLLOWING ME?!?!
WHAT?
I... NNN. NO. YOU'RE NOT HIM. YET. STILL...

...IF THE FUTURE I COME FROM IS ANYTHING TO JUDGE BY, TO KILL YOU NOW WOULD BE A MERCY...

... AND GALVATRON HAS NO MERCY.

HOT ROD! ARE YOU OKAY?

UH? OH, YEAH, SIREN...

THE WEIRDEST THING JUST HAPPENED...

I-I THINK THAT'S THE LEAST OF OUR WORRIES!

WHAT DO YOU M- AH...

...HECK!

DEEP SPACE, 2357.

...AFTER UNICRON'S MIND-GAP, I FORGOT ALL ABOUT MY ENCOUNTER WITH GALVATRON. IT TURNED OUT HE WAS FROM AN ALTERNATE UNIVERSE; WHERE THE DECEPTICONS WON THE WAR, AND I DIED.

ON REFLECTION, I'M NOT SURE WHICH VERSION OF ME WAS LUCKIER.

NOW, WITH THE MATRIX-BOUND ESSENCE OF UNICRON EATING AWAY AT MY BODY AND SOUL, I FIND MYSELF WONDERING IF MY QUEST FOR REDEMPTION IS A FOOL'S ERRAND.

"THE THING THAT REALLY PLAYS ON MY MIND IS HOW IT HAS ONLY BEEN BY CHANCE THAT WE MANAGED TO DEFEAT THE CHAOS-BRINGER IN THE PAST..."

"... I DON'T KNOW WHY I'M RECORDING THIS. I MAY ONLY HAVE A FEW DAYS TO LIVE, AND I THINK MY LUCK HAS RUN OUT."

THE MATRIX IS EXHAUSTED; IT COULDN'T DEFEAT UNICRON.

THE COMBINED AUTOBOTS AND DECEPTICONS COULDN'T. PRIMUS HIMSELF COULDN'T.

THANX TO WHITTLE

"WHAT CHANCE DO I HAVE?"

END.

"THEY THINK THIS IS CYBERTRON."

"THEY BELIEVE IT TO BE THEIR HOMEWORLD."

"WHEN IN FACT, IT WAS ONCE THE HOME TO ANOTHER RACE."

THIS WAS ALMOST TOO EASY!

MEGATRON'S ORDERS WERE CLEAR.

"A RACE NO LESS WAR-LIKE THAN THE TRANSFORMERS!"
THE PRIMAL SACRIFICE
AMBUSH!!
TRANSMASTERS UK PRESENTS THUNDERJAW IN
"THE PRIMAL SACRIFICE" SCRIPT GRAHAM THOMSON
ARTWORK JACK LAWRENCE LETTERS GRAHAM THOMSON
DINOSAUR CONSULTANT JACK LAWRENCE

LOOKS LIKE THE HISTORY TAPES ARE WRONG AGAIN

ONLY THE DECEPT ICON SKYWARP HAD SUCH AN ABILITY!

KHOOM!

SHEEARGH!!

DON'T WORRY ABOUT HIM. HE HAS WHAT WE CALL

I SPENT A DECACYCLE PREENING THOSE!

ABSOLUTE INVERSION!

NEVER MIND THESE VEHICONS! WE HAVE OUR ORDERS TO FOLLOW!

OBOTS ARE A ROGUE ELEMENT WE CAN DO WITHOUT!

WHAT ELSE COULD WE DO WITH YOU AND THE CREW OF THE AURORA AFTER YOUR WAR WITH THE OETH?

BUT OUR CAUSE WAS RIGHT AND JUST!

WE DECIDE WHAT IS RIGHT AND JUST!

EITHER YOU ACCEPT THIS MISSION...

...OR YOU WILL CONTINUE TO ROT ON COLONY OMICRON!

WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE THE ORACLE HAS BEEN CORRUPTED BY SOME KIND OF PARANORMAL ENTITY AND IS USING OPTIMUS PRIMAL AS A PAWN TO EXECUTE ITS INSIDIOUS PLAN!

BUT WE'RE NOT... MURDERERS!

"I THINK THE CREW OF THE AURORA WOULD BEG TO DIFFER.

YOU HAVE CERTAINLY DEMONSTR--

"PRIMAL'S MAXIMALS HAVE ALREADY BEEN REFORMATTED BY THE ORACLE TO PROTECT THEM FROM MEGATRON'S VIRUS."

"THIS... VACCINE WILL RENDER YOU IMMUNE."

KRRRAAA

UNITS MIRAGE AND BLASTCHARGE ARE TEMPORARILY OFFLINE, EXULTED ONE
HURRRRRR
THESE.. DINOBOTS ARE SOMEHOW IMMUNE TO THE EFFECTS OF MY VIRUS!
MY DRONESSS WILL MAKE SSSHORT WORK OF THEM, SSSIRE!
NO!
THEIR APPARENT IMMUNITY MAY HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH AN OLD ALLIANCE OF MINE.
SPYSTREAK. HAVE YOUR DRONES FOLLOW THEM. BUT KEEP IT DISCREET I WANT TO KNOW WHAT THEYRE UP TO!

SIR MY SCANNERS INDICATE OPTIMUS AND HIS TEAM ARE DIRECTLY BELOW US!

HOW FAR DOWN?

FOURTEEN LEVELS..

AND THEN SOME!

"THEN LET'S GO! BEAST MODE EVERYONE.. WE DON'T WANT TO ATTRACT MORE VENICONS!"

SSSTALK THEM. MY SSSPY DRONESSS!

SUB-LEVEL 06-E

SUB-LEVEL 23-E

SUB-LEVEL 15-E

WHAT KIND OF ANIMAL WAS THIS?

SUB-LEVEL 23-E

ONE OF THE FEW EARTH SPECIES NOT PART OF THE OETH'S PROJECT

SUB-LEVEL 23-W

"NONRECEPTIVE SPARES SHAME."

"LEAVE IT FOR NOW. WE HAVE TO PRESS ON."

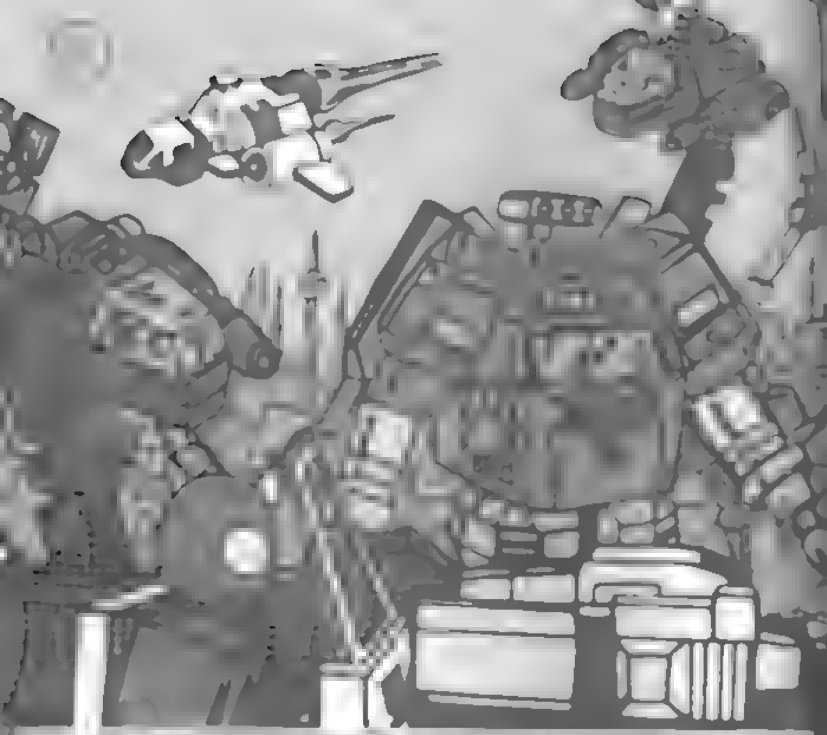
FOR THE SAKE OF MY GREAT AUNT ARCEE! I AM--

WHO?!

OPTIMUS PRIMAL. IN THE NAME OF THE PAX CYBERTRONIA, THE HIGH COUNCIL HAVE CALLED FOR YOUR IMMEDIATE TERMINATION!

OH, MY STARS AND GARTERS!

TO BE CONTINUED...!



Chapter One

[illegible] you're holding it the wrong

Quit showing. Oh, for crying out loud, dropped it."

"Let me have a go."

"Don't pick it up by that end. The trick is not to drop it."

Megatron covered his optics as Thrust and Scavenger con-

out of hyperspace had been the easy part, but the craft's

presenting further difficulties in taking possession of their prize. He could have sworn he heard giggling coming from inside the alien cruiser.

"You imbeciles have one second to stand aside or be

As his two lackeys scrambled to get out of the way he raised

tors open the hull like it was tissue paper. The subtle ap-

terior seemed to be a vacuum. That meant that

sending him spiralling off

swept the Decepticons' position, systematically rendering

pilated Megatron's fusion cannon.

Thrust. "Do you think this could be

le with a tremendous velocity born of his repulsive magnetic field, and colliding - th Megatron, sending the

attention to the trembling Warmaster.

Written and illustrated by ***Martin McVay***

Ramjet, Hook and Long Haul fired into the ship, hoping to take out Cliffjumper and any other Autobots hiding inside. Some of their laser fire was reflected back at them, the reason for this becoming clear as Trailbreaker emerged alongside his small red friend, both of them protected by a near-impenetrable one-way force-field. They proceeded to despatch the enemy at their leisure with a combination of wrist-rockets, twin blasters and glass-gas.

Windcharger, meanwhile, had separated himself from the Decepticon Leader and propelled him helplessly into infinity with one magnetic arm, while simultaneously reaching out with the other to pull himself back to the ship. Seeing this, Scrapper transformed to his flight mode and sped off to retrieve his commander, realising there was nothing he could do to save his fallen comrades, whose deactivated bodies were already being gathered up by Brawn, Cliffjumper and Trailbreaker to be placed in stasis and shuttled back to Autobot Headquarters. He signalled Astrotrain to come and pick them up. The operation had been an utter disaster. How had the Autobots known they would attack this particular convoy? It was impossible – unless they had a traitor in their midst.

On Earth, in a hidden underground complex carved out millions of years previously by an ancient and long-forgotten alien civilisation, Ratchet turned to his base commander, Prowl, and reported that the mission had been a complete success. Eight Decepticons and one warship captured – not a bad day's work for a lone surgeon.

Chapter Two

Cybertron, more than four million years previously

"What's his name?"

"I don't know, let me check. He's certainly a big fellow. Ah, here we are. Megatron. Oh no, that's not right. Megatron. What a strange designation. I wonder what it means?"

"Never mind that now. What's wrong with him?"

"If I knew that, I wouldn't be here. We've tried all the best surgeons from here to Tarn, but no-one has been able to help him. You're his last hope, Ratchet. You're the best there is."

"Flattery will get you everywhere," smiled Iacon's Chief Medical Officer. "Now, Hoist, tell me everything you know about this poor fellow."

Ratchet had never seen anything like it. The Autobot's insides were a mess. It was as if someone had taken Megatron apart piece by nanoscopic piece and then put him back together again in a manner contrary to all standard medical procedures. The Matrix Energy sustaining the living metal that was his body seemed to be out of flux with the rest of Cybertron. And that was nothing compared to what the surgeon found when, in desperation, he removed the mechanoid's cerebral circuitry to transplant it into a new body. The Matrix Energy left his old shell as predicted and swarmed around the brain module, ready for its new host, but insisted on keeping its distance. It was almost as if it was afraid to get too close to whatever was inside Megatron's mind.

Multiple scans of the tiny brain module made Ratchet take a step back in shock. It couldn't be – but it was! Megatron's cerebral circuits contained an artificial singularity, a tiny black hole or wormhole presumably connecting him to some unknown point in space-time. How it had got there and what was preventing it from decaying were a mystery, the nanobots responsible for its stability and Megatron's general condition being as they were at this time invisible to Ratchet's sensors.

At this point many scientists would have transferred the stricken robot's circuits to a laboratory for technological analysis, but Ratchet's priority was his patient's well-being. Whatever or whoever had been playing merry hell with this Autobot's insides, immediate action was required if his life was to be saved.

Ratchet refused to let anyone enter his medical bay for three solar cycles straight. He finally emerged, exhausted but triumphant, supporting the groggy but very much living Autobot known as Megatron. Neither of them spoke of what they had learnt. Megatron had no wish to be dissected further, and Ratchet respected doctor-patient confidentiality.

"Thank you," said Megatron.

"You're welcome," replied Ratchet. "It looks as if you'll live to fight another day after all."

It was only intended as a figure of speech.

Chapter Three

Megatron was worried. Three defeats in as many weeks, all at the hands of the Autobot battle unit under the command of Chief Military Strategist Prowl, and all indicating that they had an informant within the Decepticons' ranks.

Trouble was, Megatron was the only Decepticon who had known about all three missions before they went down. His remaining troops, still licking their wounds, had not yet cottoned on to this fact, but in time someone would put two and two together. It confirmed Megatron's worst suspicions – suspicions that had been growing for some time now. Ever since he had returned from being Galvatron, this group of Autobots had possessed a tactical advantage over him, and only he knew now what it was. He himself was the security risk, and there was absolutely nothing he could do about it. If only he could get his hands on his tormentor. If only he could locate...

Ratchet reclined on a test-bed in the Autobots' underground lair, optics closed, monitoring Megatron's movements.

"He's worried," he told Prowl, standing alongside him. "I think he's onto us. But he doesn't know what to do about it."

At the head of the table, Gears and Inferno prodded around inside Ratchet's half-open brain casing. "Any luck?" Prowl prompted them.

"Don't ask me," replied Inferno. "I haven't a clue what we're doing. I wish Ratchet were able to take a look at this himself."

"Don't worry," Gears reassured the doctor. "If anything goes wrong, you'll be the first to know."

"How comforting," winced Ratchet.

Gears turned to his base commander.

"We're making some progress," he reported. "The mind-link established between Ratchet and Megatron back in 1989 which lay dormant in the years leading up to the latter's change into Galvatron is now only partially active. We can see him, but he can't see us."

"That's excellent news."

"But part of Ratchet's mind is still sealed off. There are memories we can't access – not just the ones Inferno told us about pertaining to the forgotten war on prehistoric Earth, but also ones for the period in which Ratchet and Megatron were trapped in interdimensional space. Although it proved a convenient explanation at the time, there's no way the explosion in Megatron's fortress base that propelled them through the Space Bridge portal could have fused them together so perfectly, minds included. Explosions don't do that. Explosions blow things to pieces."

"So you're saying some intelligent force took Ratchet and Megatron and performed a surgical procedure on them while they floated in interdimensional space?" summed up Prowl.

"I'm sure of it. But who they were, and why they did it, I have no idea."

Ratchet gave a bitter laugh. "No wonder Megatron is so screwed up. First the nanobots experiment on him, sticking an artificial wormhole in his brain and giving him the ability to connect his internal circuits to an antimatter black hole in a distant sector of the Galaxy, and then millions of years later he goes through that Straxus business and someone else plucking him out of interdimensional space and connecting his brain to that of an Autobot. It kind of makes you feel sorry for the guy."

Gears and Inferno looked at each other.

"Nah," they shook their heads in unison.

Chapter Four

The year 1985

"Your agonising end should provide me with some small amusement at least for a little while..."

It was not the first time Ratchet and Megatron had met as enemies, but it was the first time they had met in the absence of others since the surgeon saved the would-be conqueror's life all those years ago. Ratchet knew enough, however, not to rely on services rendered in the past for a merciful reprieve. This was war!

But before Megatron could carry out his threat, the purple image of Shockwave formed on the main communications screen and ordered him to prepare the head of Optimus Prime for transport. In a fit of rage at his dishonourable predicament, the deposed leader smashed the monitor the moment the transmission ended.

"I- I can help you, Megatron," stammered the terrified doctor, finally realising the state of play with regard to the Decepticon leadership and seeing a possible way out of his deadly situation.

"Help me what? Grind Autobots to powder?"

"No. Help you defeat Shockwave!"

Megatron slammed him up against the wall with phenomenal force. "Your jest will not save you from your doom!"

"It's true," Ratchet insisted. "I know how he was defeated before, by the Dinobots!" This was a lie, but Megatron's optics glazed over as he considered the possibility. He was buying it.

They made a deal. Ratchet would defeat Shockwave and restore Megatron to his rightful position as leader, and in return Megatron would let him have the Ark. They sealed the bargain by mixing their fuel, the life-blood of the Transformer race, the essence of two very different mechanoids merged into one.

Ratchet took one of the Ark's fleet of white shuttlecraft and sought out the Dinobots, who had lain buried in Antarctica for the last four million years. He then met Megatron as arranged on a high cliff-top. He knew all too well that the other robot would not uphold his side of the bargain, and so pretended to have fulfilled his own to see what would happen. The Decepticon's treachery was revealed as he moved swiftly to execute the Autobot surgeon – only this time he found that his victim was not alone.

The Dinobots emerged from places of concealment in the snow and battled Megatron, but they turned out to be no match for him. Ratchet realised he had to act like a warrior as well as think like one, and charged the Decepticon, hoping desperately to take them both over the edge. He failed.

"Ha ha ha!" laughed Megatron. "You were willing to carry us both over this cliff to our doom, Autobot – very admirable! You are a fool, but it is still an honour for me to now destroy a warrior as brave as..."

And with that, the cliff edge crumbled beneath his feet and Megatron fell, vanishing out of sight far below into a deep snow drift. The Ark belonged once more to the Autobots.

Chapter Five

"Buzzsaw, Frenzy, Ravage, Rumble, Bombshell, Kickback, Shrapnel. Scrapper – report to the launch bay immediately for a new assignment."

Megatron decided he had to bring things to a head. The present situation was unacceptable. If he couldn't stop Ratchet from reading his thoughts and discovering his plans, it was time to put into action a plan that the Autobots would be powerless to stop, regardless of whether they knew about it or not. It was time to play his trump card. All his years as Galvatron, his antimatter powers had been inaccessible to him, but now they had returned and he was finally able to conclude an operation begun centuries earlier.

In the Autobots' underground lair, Brawn and Cliffjumper made their way over to the main briefing dome. Prowl's summons had been urgent. They could already see Trailbreaker entering ahead of them.

"Where's Windcharger?" wondered Brawn.

Cliffjumper looked sad. "Windcharger, I'm afraid, will never walk this path with us again."

Brawn stopped and put a hand on his friend's arm. "Why? What's happened?"

Cliffjumper was silent for a moment, then:

"He's installed roller-skates."

Brawn sighed. "I warned him. I told him hover-boards were in this year, but he never listens. He said it was 'retro'."

When all were assembled, Prowl stood up to address them. He looked grave. True, Prowl nearly always looked grave, but this time he appeared six feet under.

"A LONG TIME AGO - 56 MILLION YEARS TO BE PRECISE - SOMETHING HAPPENED."

"THE FIRST FREE-THINKING MECHANICALS SPRANG SUDDENLY AND UNEXPECTEDLY FROM THE SIZZLING GEOSTRATA OF A METALLIC PLANET."

"SPONTANEOUS EVOLUTION: THEY SAY IT JUST HAPPENED."

"AND I WOULD LIKE TO THINK THAT YES, THIS WAS ONLY A MATTER OF CHANCE."

"AS REPORTED IN THE *PORTLAND ORACLE* SEPTEMBER 20TH 1984."

"THERE IS A STORY OF A LONG-DORMANT VOLCANO SUDDENLY AND UNEXPECTEDLY SHEDDING ITS LOAD."

"SPONTANEOUS ERUPTION: THEY SAY IT JUST HAPPENED."

"BUT WHAT THE *ORACLE* FAILS TO MENTION, WHAT IT CANNOT POSSIBLY KNOW, IS THAT THE EXPLOSION REACTIVATED THE ON BOARD COMPUTER OF AN ALIEN SPACECRAFT THAT HAD BEEN WEDGED AT THE VOLCANO'S BASE FOR FOUR MILLION YEARS."

"THE COMPUTER BEGAN REPAIRING THE SPACESHIP'S OCCUPANTS."

"THE SPACESHIP'S BEING THE DIRECT DESCENDANTS OF THOSE FIRST FEW FREE THINKING PROTOFORMS."

"AND I'M TRYING TO THINK THAT THIS WAS ONLY A MATTER OF CHANCE."

"MINISTRY RECORDS DESCRIBE AN INCIDENT THAT OCCURED IN IACON 2302, AT THE OPEN-AIR SIGNING OF THE ANTIMORPHISM TREATY"

"AN AUDIENCE OF MILLIONS WITNESSES THE SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL OF AN ENTIRE CITY-STREET, COMPLETE WITH TERRIFIED PEDESTRIANS."

"SPONTANEOUS MATERIALISATION THEY SAY IT JUST HAPPENED."

"AND IT IS THE HUMBLE OPINION OF THIS NARRATOR THAT THIS IS NOT JUST 'SOMETHING THAT JUST HAPPENED' THIS CANNOT BE 'ONE OF THOSE THINGS'."

"THIS PLEASE. CANNOT BE THAT..."

CYBERTRON, DECEMBER 21ST, 2012

LIARS, A TO D

TRANSMASTERS DE presents STAR SABER in
"LIARS, A TO D (from: DARK EMPIRE)"
Artwork MATT DALLAS Letters GRAHAM THOMSON

PARTLY OVERCAST WITH A SLIGHT CHANCE OF RAD ZONE FALLOUT
FORCE 10 GRIT-WINDS, 67% CHANCE OF GRAVITY WELLS ACROSS THE ORBITAL RIM.*

WITH AUTOBASE DESTROYED AND THE SO-CALLED RESISTANCE IN ITS DEATH THROES, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A BETTER TIME TO JOIN THE DECEPTICON ARMY!

TO NEWLY-SCULPTED PROTOFORMS. HOW ELSE COULD WE HAVE MAINTAINED CONTROL OF CYBERTRON FOR SO LONG? IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR PIECE OF MIND, OR A CHANCE TO INDULGE YOUR BLOOD LUST, OR JUST GUARANTEE THAT YOU WON'T BE ONE OF THE

EVER SINCE THE SPECTACULAR COUP D'ETAT IN 9TH CYCLE 549, THE DECEPTICON JUNTA HAS BEEN RECRUITING THOUSANDS OF CIVILIANS, FROM BUDDING ANARCHISTS TO EX-THEOSCIENTISTS, FIRST CHURCHERS.

THOUSANDS KILLED IN THE IMMINENT CULLING OF EVERY CIVILIAN SETTLEMENT, NOW'S THE TIME TO JOIN UP. WHO RETURNED CYBERTRON TO ITS ORIGINAL ORBIT IN 2000? THE DECEPTICONS. WHO IS COMMITTED TO REJUVENATING THIS WORLD? THE DECEPTICONS!

DEEP INSIDE THE NEW AUTOBASE

PLEDGE YOUR ALLEGIANCE TO THE DECEPTICON CAUSE AND HELP CRUSH THE AUTOBOTS AND THEIR OUT-DATED, SELF-DEFEATING CODE OF ETHICS

IT'S A BLANKET BROADCAST HE'S BOMBARDING THE SOUTHER TERRITORIES THERE'S A CONTACT NUMBER. YOU WANT ME TO CALL?

CERTAINLY NOT YOU MIGHT AS WELL GO OUTSIDE AND WAVE A RED FLAG.

YOU THINK THAT'S ALL THIS IS A WAY TO FIND OUT WHERE WE'RE HIDING?

I DON'T KNOW. GALVATRON SEEMS SO IMPASSIONED, SO CONSUMED. PERHAPS HE'S FINALLY ABOUT TO MAKE THE BIG PUSH AND END THIS ONCE AND FOR ALL.

CALL THIS NUMBER NOW AND COMMIT YOURSELF TO A PEACEFUL FUTURE. A FUTURE OF WEALTH, PROGRESS AND SECURITY.

AND... CUT!

THAT WILL DO FOR NOW.

THEY THINK THAT THIS IS CHEAP AND BELITTLING, AND THEY'RE RIGHT. BUT WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO? HOW DO YOU SUBJUGATE AN ENTIRE PLANET WHEN YOUR LEADER...

"...HASN'T SPOKEN TO ANYONE FOR DECADONS?"

"NUKE DRIFTS FROM MANGANESE MOUNTAINS. PRESSURE POCKET NORTH OF MYTHARC. ENGEX-SPILL IN RUST SEA, 84% CHANCE OF GRAVITY WELLS ACROSS THE ORBITAL RUN."

TPR>X\\ **W.R W.R >> X*SRC X

T->X.Y*
SRC>>X.
T->X.Z*
SRC X

PRIME!

I THOUGHT YOU WERE HAVING A SEIZURE!

I'M FINE. KUP - FINE. I WAS JUST EXPERIMENTING.

ACTUALLY, I WAS JUST CLUTCHING AT STRAWS. THE FIRST CHURCH BELIEVES THAT IF YOU RECITE THE PRIMAL PENTECHURCH WHILE APPROACHING VSS* YOU MERGE WITH THE ALLSPARK

"VOLUNTARY SYSTEMS SHUTDOWN

AND YOU THINK THAT WOULD SOMEHOW BANISH JINCR--

KUP! REMEMBER THE RULES! NEVER USE HIS NAME.

LOOK, I'M SORRY... I'M JUST FRUSTRATED. MY EXORCISM RESEARCH IS GOING NOWHERE. I'VE READ ALL THE CREATIONIST LITERATURE RIGHT BACK TO THE KEEPER'S JOURNALS -

AND IT'S TOLD ME NOTHING NEW

SORRY TO HEAR THAT. I WANTED TO LET YOU KNOW THAT PERCEPTOR'S ARRANGED NIGHTBEAT'S TRANSFERRAL FROM DELPHI. HE SHOULD BE HERE IN A FEW BREEMS. OH, AND COSMOS HAS DETECTED GEO-FRAGMENTS CLUSTERED AROUND ORBITAL CO-ORDINATES 250/801. HE THINKS THEY'RE THE REMAINS OF MOONBASE 4. THEY'VE BEEN HANGING THERE SINCE 2006

I THOUGHT COSMOS WAS SUPPOSED TO BE WITH MIRAGE AND THE OTHERS.

THE HELEX TRIP? NO - THUNDERCLASH DOWNSIZED THE TEAM.

HE SAID THAT A SURVEILLANCE MISSION DIDN'T NEED FOUR PEOPLE.

WELL?

WELL WHAT? LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH

BLAM!

SKREEEE

SHOOM!

BLAMM

BRAKOOM!

hud!

CIT

TYPICAL.

"TECHTONIC SLUMP IN TERBIUM PLAINS. RESIDUAL ENERGON FLARE IN ..ONIUM. SCALE 2 QUAKE IN THE SONIC CANYONS. 98% CHANCE OF GRAVITY WE..S ACROSS THE ORBITAL RIM."

THEY'RE STILL ON OUR TAIL

THANK YOU FOR POINTING THAT OUT, FASTLANE!

DON'T BELIEVE THIS FIRST TIME OUT THE CANYONS FOR FOUR YEARS AND WE RUN INTO THESE TWO. PERCEPTOR BETTER HAVE A GOOD REASON DRAG GING ME

HALWAY ACROSS CYBERTRON

NICE ONE, FLYBOY! NOW THEY KNOW WE'RE AFTER THEM! WE COULD'VE TRACKED THEM RIGHT TO THEIR FRONT DOOR IF YOU HADN'T OPENED FIRE!

RIGHT NOW, I'VE GOT MORE IMPORTANT THINGS ON MY MIND!

CLOUDRAKER! WE'VE BEEN –

DON'T EVEN SAY IT, FASTLANE!

KNOW THIS ISN'T THE TIME BUT I'M PICKING UP A LOT OF AIRBORNE ACTIVITY

HUNDREDS OF BL PS ND, THOUSANDS. ALL HEADING THIS WAY

"RISK OF HEAVY SHOWERS "

WHAT THE HELL IS HAPPENING? IT'S RAINING METAL

BACK OFF! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS.

THEY'RE HEADING TOWARDS IACON. AT LEAST WE KNOW THE NEW BASE IS SOME WHERE NEAR THEIR OLD STOMPING GROUND.

YOU SCANNED THE SHUTTLE. RIGHT? WHO WAS ON BOARD?

NIGHTBEAT, FASTLANE AND CLOUDRAKER WHY?

OH, JUST CURIOUS. NO REASON

IT'S STARTING, JUST AS I KNEW IT WOULD.

OH WELL HERE GOES. DRASTIC TIMES AND ALL THAT.

BRAAA

YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE HESITATED, SIX-SHOT.

I WON'T MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE.

DECEMBER 22ND, 2012

AND YOU SAY THIS PARTICULAR PIECE IS FROM THE VERY CORE OF MOONBASE 27

YES. IT'S ABOUT 56 MILLION YEARS OLD. A GENUINE PIECE OF PRIMON-ERA CYBERTRON. THE CHANCES OF IT SURVIVING PLANETFALL AND LANDING ON OUR DOORSTEP ARE ASTRONOMICAL.

VERY EXCITING, PERCEP-TOR. BUT I GET THE FEEL-ING THERE'S SOME-THING YOU'RE NOT TELLING ME.

I EXPECTED THE MARKINGS ON THE FRAGMENT TO RESEMBLE THOSE WE FOUND AFTER THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG IN TENE, BUT THEY DON'T. I'VE CROSS-CHECKED THEM AGAINST EVERY VOCAB-CODE AND DIALECT FROM THE GOLDEN AGE ONWARDS, AND I'M CERTAIN OF ONLY ONE THING. WHATEVER THEY ARE...

THEY'RE NOT CYBERTRONIAN.

I SUGGEST YOU THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT WHAT YOU'VE FOUND BEFORE MAKING YOUR REPORT TO THE REST OF HIGH COMMAND.

WHAT SHALL I DO WITH THE FRAGMENT? I NEED TO STUDY IT FURTHER.

SEAL IT INSIDE THE SCHLAB IN EOCRA. WITH ALL THE OTHER EVIDENCE, AFTER ALL.

" IT'S NOT GOING ANYWHERE."

"SS/LOG/PERSONAL LOG ENTRY: I THOUGHT FOR A MOMENT THAT THE TREATY WOULD BE DERAILED. PUTTING ALL OUR GROUNDWORK TO WASTE. THANKFULLY, HOWEVER, THE DISTURBANCE WAS CONTAINED. SIDESWIPE'S MEN LED THE NEW ARRIVALS, ALL OF WHOM WERE UNDERSTANDABLY TRAUMATISED, TO A PLACE OF SAFETY."

WHERE THEY WERE INTERVIEWED BY OUR BEST COUNSELLORS

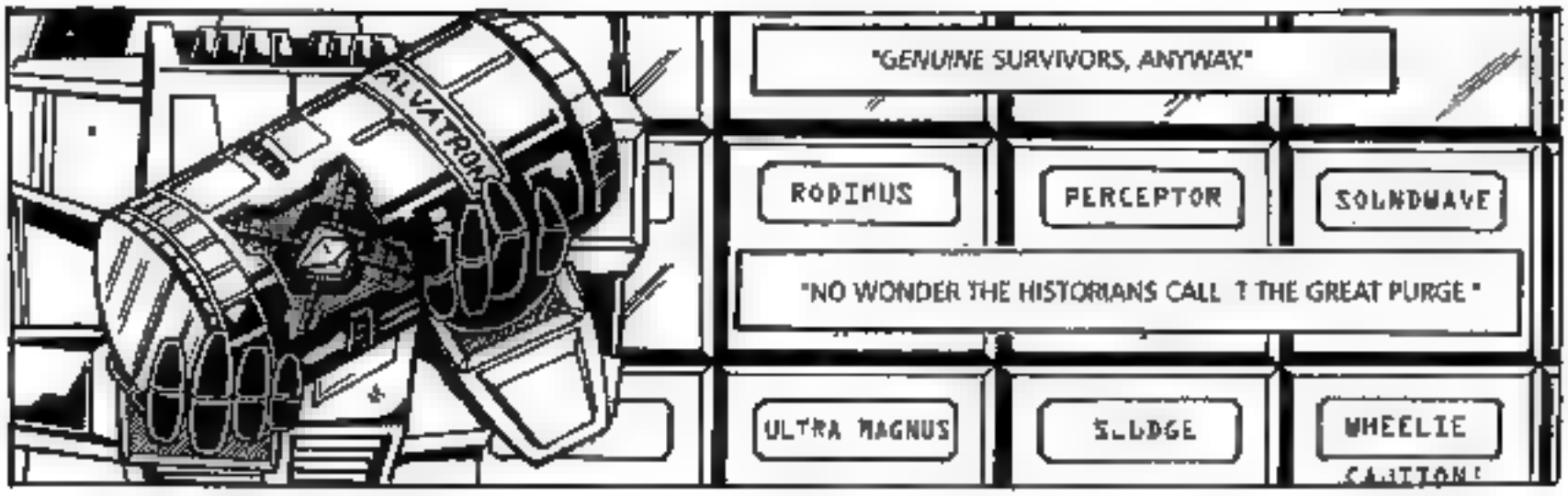
"ALL 13 OF THEM WERE CLEARLY DELUSIONAL. THEY CLAIMED TO BE NEUTRALISTS FROM THE YEAR 2013. THE STREET THAT BROUGHT THEM HERE FORMED PART OF THE SCI-LAB IN EOCRA, AN OLD LACONIAN SUBURB. ACCORDING TO SEISOR, WE'D WITNESSED A TEMPORAL FLASH, WITH A FRAGMENT OF THE PAST BEING SUPERIMPOSED ON THE FUTURE. AT THIS POINT IN INTERVENED."

"WHAT STRUCK ME MOST WAS THEIR ATTITUDE. EVEN AFTER THEIR COUNSELLING, THEY MAINTAINED THAT THEY WERE GLAD TO ESCAPE THE YEAR 2013. WHEN ASKED WHY, THEY SAID THAT THEY'D BEEN WITNESSING THE END OF THE WORLD.

THE END OF CYBERTRON

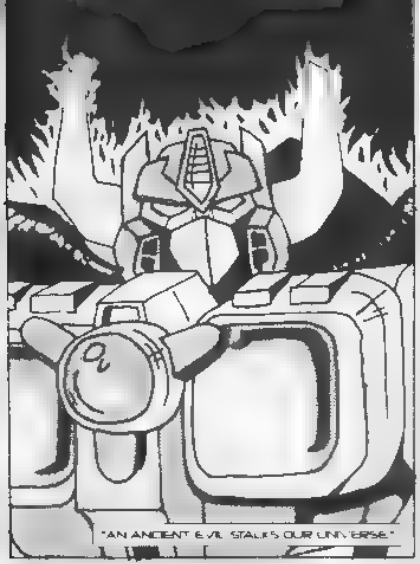
"WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS PATENTLY UNTRUE, BECAUSE HE WE WERE 300 YEARS ON, THEY LOOKED AT ME AS IF I WERE MAD. THEY ASKED HOW I COULD BE SO SURE THAT THIS UNIVERSE WAS THE SAME AS THEIRS."

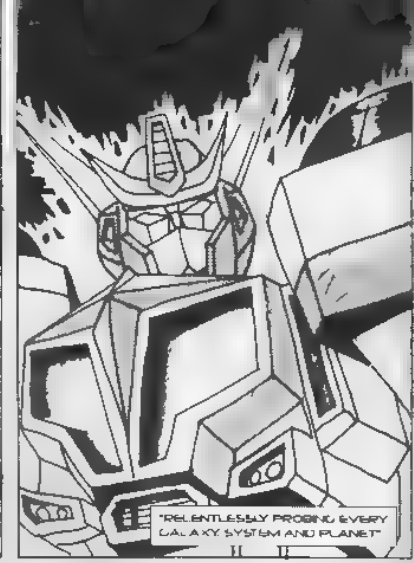
"CLEARLY, WHATEVER HAPPENED IN 2013, IT WAS SOMETHING BIG. I'LL HAVE TO SEARCH THE MINISTRY'S MEMBANKS FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THAT PERIOD. I'D ASK A TROOPER FOR AN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNT, BUT THERE SEEMS TO BE SO FEW SURVIVORS FROM THAT PERIOD."

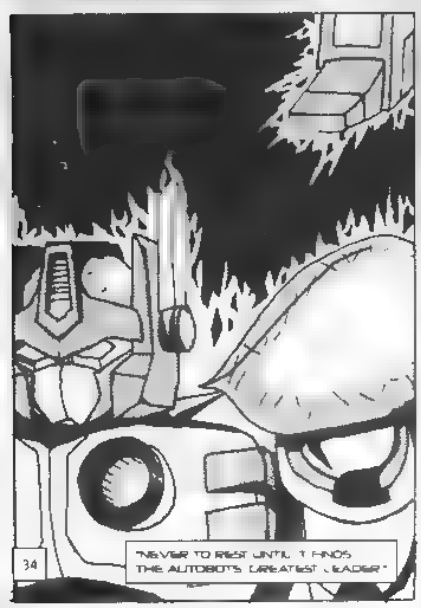

ALVATRON
"GENUINE SURVIVORS, ANYWAY."
RODIMUS
PERCEPTOR
SOUNDWAVE
"NO WONDER THE HISTORIANS CALL T THE GREAT PURGE."
ULTRA MAGNUS
SLUDGE
WHEELIE
CAUTION!

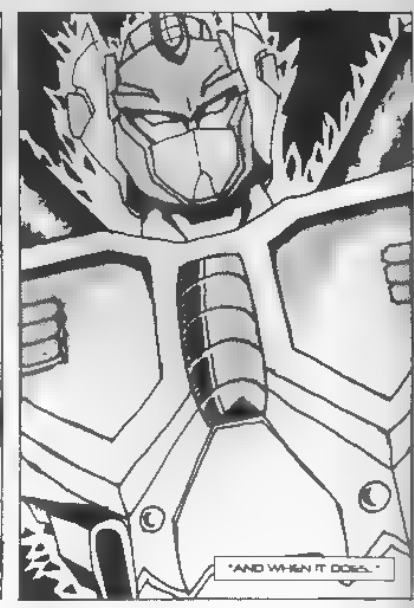
POSTSCRIPT

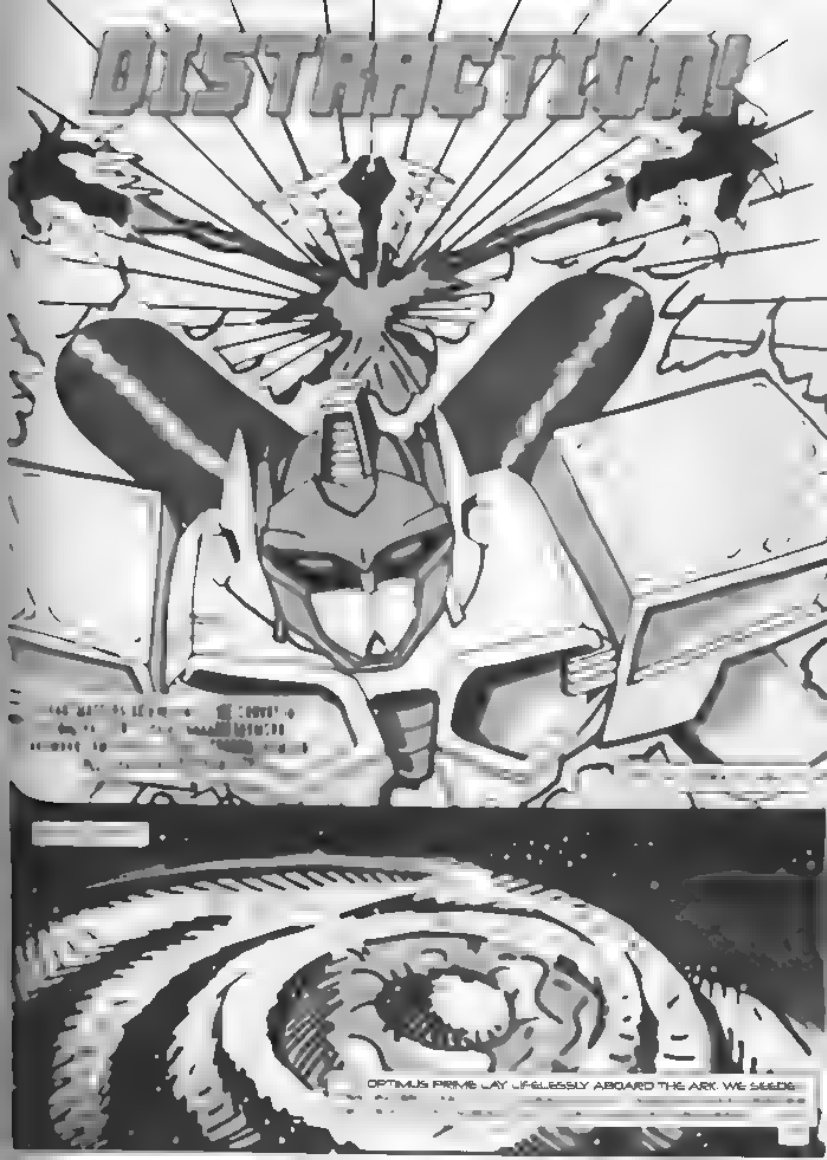
"AND THERE IS THE ACCOUNT OF ALPHA POINT, AND MOUNT ST HILARY, AND THE 13 NEUTRALISTS."
"THERE ARE STORIES OF COINCIDENCE, AND CHANCE AND INTERSECTION AND STRANGE THINGS TOLD, AND WHICH IS WHICH AND WHO ONLY KNOWS.
"AND IT IS THE HUMBLE OPINION OF THIS NARRATOR THAT STRANGE THINGS HAPPEN ALL THE TIME AND SO IT GOES. AND SO IT GOES."
"AND AS THE OLD TEXTS SAY, WE MAY BE THROUGH WITH THE PAST."
"BUT THE PAST ISN'T THROUGH WITH US."
TO BE CONTINUED IN
EUGENESIS: FIFTH EPOCH
A NOVEL FROM TRANSMASTERS UK


"AN ANCIENT EVIL STALKS OUR UNIVERSE."

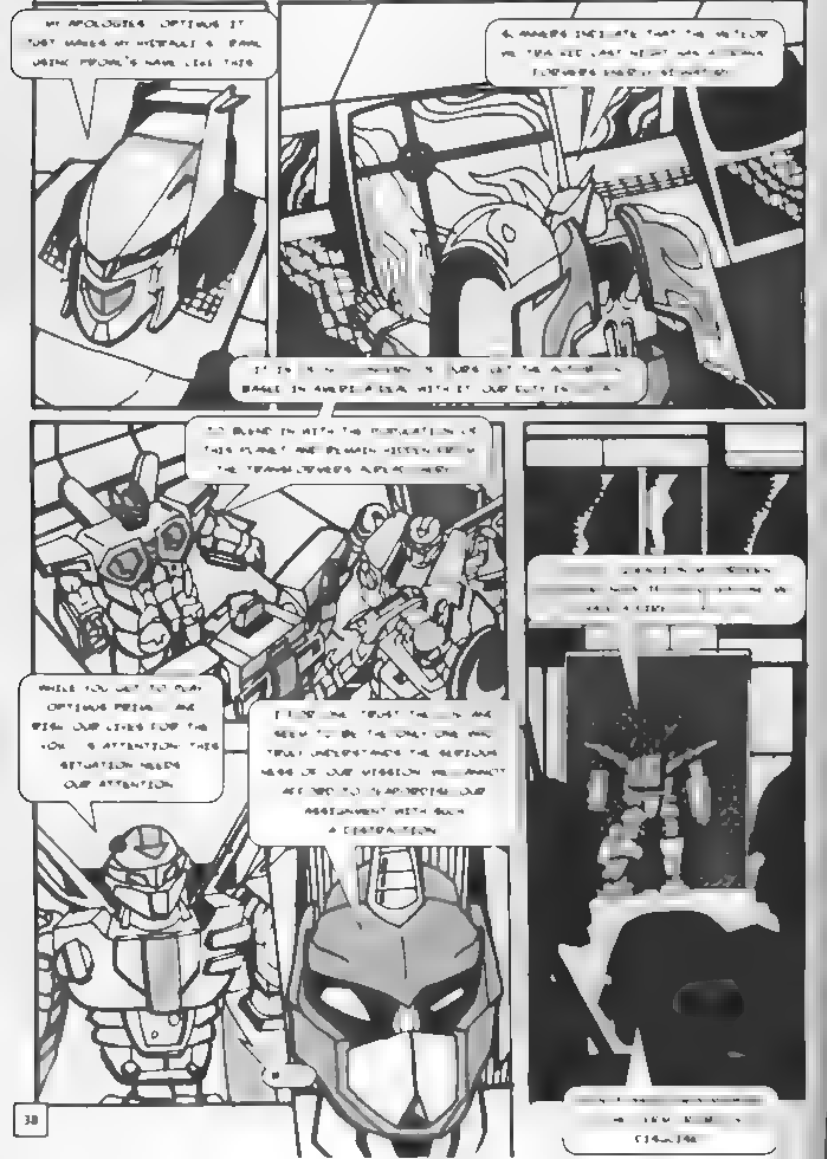

"RELENTLESSLY PROBING EVERY GALAXY SYSTEM AND PLANET"

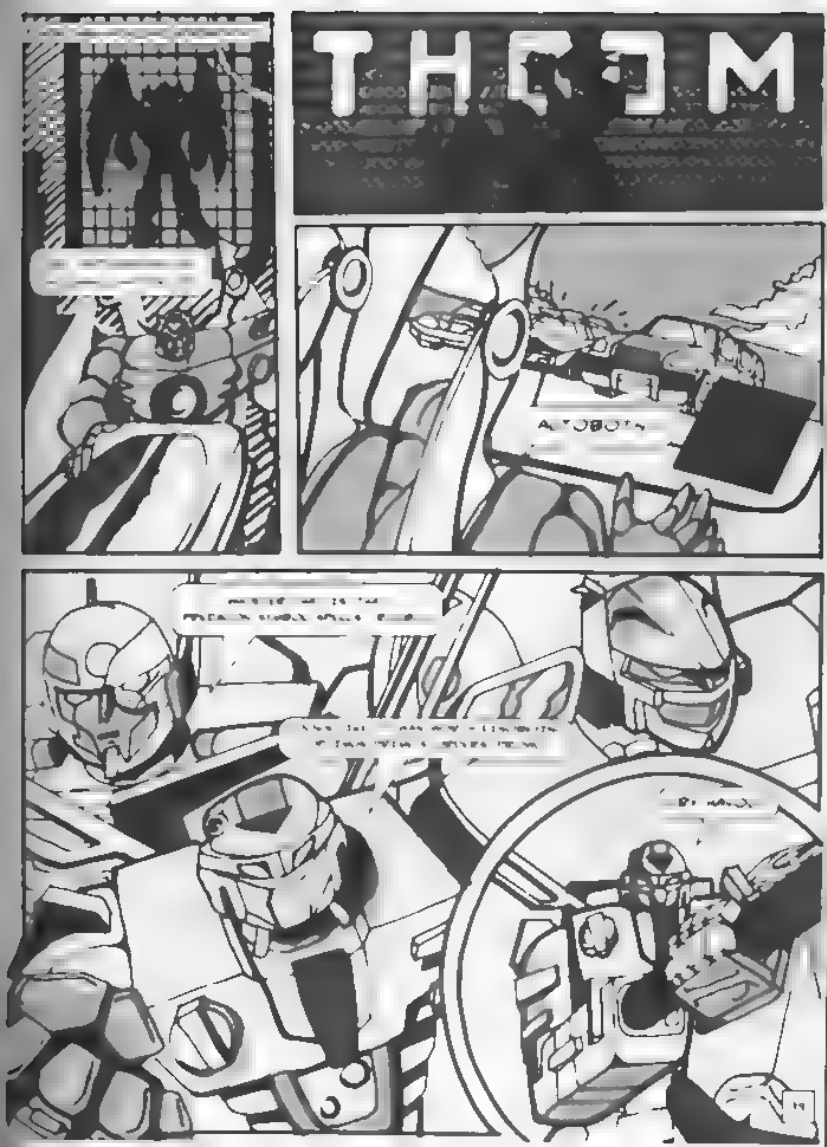

"NEVER TO REST UNTIL IT FINDS THE AUTOBOTS' GREATEST LEADER."


"AND WHEN IT DOES..."

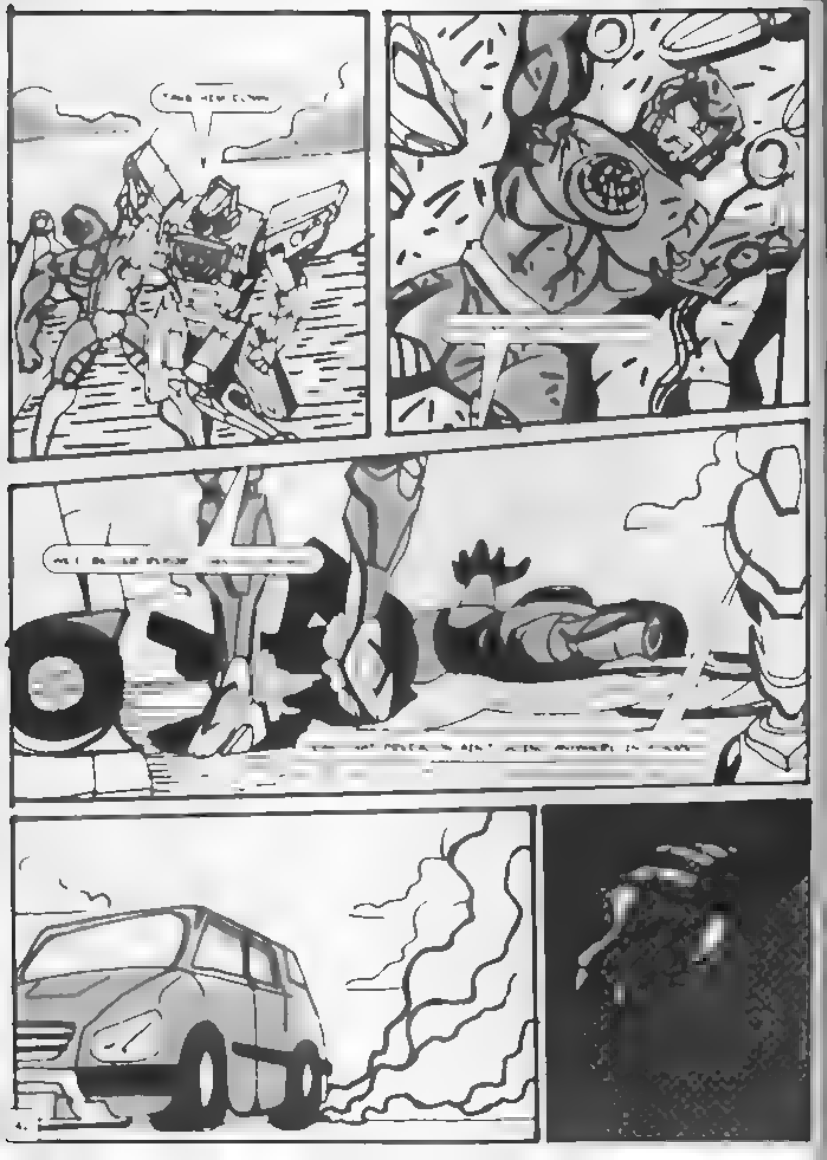

DISTRACTION!
OPTIMUS PRIME LAY LIFELESSLY ABOARD THE ARK. WE SEEDS

"AN ENERGY SIGNATURE MATCHING THAT OF THE AXALON HAS BEEN DETECTED 24 MICROLIGHTS AWAY."


MY APOLOGIES, OPTIMUS. IT JUST MAKES MY NERVES A BIT MORE PRONE TO THINK LIKE THIS
IT IS A SHAME THAT THE MATTER OF THE ALLSPARK MUST BE PUT ASIDE FOR NOW
BUT WE MUST BE READY TO BATTLE IN ANY AREA, WITH IT OUR DUTY TO
WE BLEND IN WITH THE POPULATION OF THIS PLANET AND REMAIN HIDDEN FROM THE TRANSFORMERS AROUND
WHILE YOU WAIT TO PLAY OPTIMUS PRIME AND RISK OUR LIVES FOR THE SAKE OF ATTENTION, THIS ATTENTION NEEDS OUR ATTENTION
I KNOW WHAT THE MATTER MEANS TO BE THE ONLY ONE WHO TRULY UNDERSTANDS THE MISSION NEEDS OF OUR MISSION AND I AM NOT AFRAID TO APPRECIATE OUR ASSIGNMENT WITH SUCH A DISTINCTION


THROM
AUTOBOTS

RE AAAAAH!



THIS PLANET

"In the early Twenty-first Century, shortly before he became Galvatron and lost his nanobot-derived superpowers, Megatron discovered the location of the black hole to which his internal circuits had been inextricably linked millions of years previously up until that point, he had only been able to access its antimatter remotely, drawing energy to him through an artificial wormhole in his cerebral cortex, but with direct access he became able to unleash a far more deadly weapon for this black hole acts as the prison for an unknown number of anti-matter creatures trapped there by forces unknown when the universe was still young and both matter and antimatter existed freely Megatron now intends to return to the aptly named Chaos Point and release them all. The devastation they could cause in the matter universe would be immense We have no choice but to try to stop him before he sets in motion a chain of events that could wipe out life in our Galaxy "

As the meeting broke up, Prowl approached Ratchet

"You look tired," he observed

"Maintaining the mental link takes a lot out of me," the surgeon confessed

"I want you to stay here and look after the base," Prowl decided. "You're too valuable to us to risk in this battle "

"No can do, Prowl This mission is critical You may need me to tell you what Megatron is up to when you arrive at the black hole, and I can't do that if I'm stuck on a ball of rock thousands of light-years away "

Prowl considered for a moment, weighing his friend's life against the needs of the moment He could not deny Ratchet's logic – there was too much at stake today to keep any assets in reserve

"All right, but you're to stay out of harm's way when we engage the enemy "

"You won't even know I'm there," the doctor promised

Chapter Six

The year 1989

Megatron was back! And he had not forgotten his indignities suffered at the hands of Ratchet

This time revenge took a particularly strange form. Rather than dismembering him, Megatron abducted the Autobots Chief Medical Officer from the Ark and brought him to his fortress base on the planet Cybertron, where he told him that unless he did the Decepticon's bidding he would trigger a massive explosion on the Autobot starship, ending the lives of all the patients lying inoperative in Ratchet's medical bay

But it was not to be Megatron's finest hour Suffice it to say that after Ratchet had returned Starscream to operational status as instructed, Megatron left him alone in a room with three deactivated Autobots Bumblebee/Goldbug, Grimlock and Jazz – and three life-restoring Pretender shells Duh! Within hours, Ratchet once more faced Megatron with heavy back-up, and as a little insurance he used the Decepticon's Space Bridge portal to summon the explosives back from the Ark to his enemy's fortress base This did not make Megatron a happy bunny

The Decepticon Leader wisely decided to make good his escape, and headed for the portal. Ratchet leapt to stop him. The bomb was about to detonate, and he wanted Megatron at ground-zero when it did.

Sifting through the rubble, Bumblebee, Grimlock and Jazz found no trace of either of them. Nor did the pair emerge from the other side of the Space Bridge portal onto the Ark. It appeared that Ratchet had succeeded this time in correcting the mistake he had made back on Cybertron before the war began, and in ending both their lives.

As Optimus Prime mourned the loss of his closest friend and one-time teacher Megatron and Ratchet floated in interdimensional space, trapped between realities when the portal was destroyed. There they would remain for all eternity, locked in their age-old struggle

Or not in that state of nothingness, something came to them. It took the two Transformers and made them one, linking them in body and mind, then finally, many months later, returned them to their fellow robots on board the Ark.

Many urged Optimus Prime to put the monstrosity out of its misery, to end its life or return it from whence it came, but the Autobot Leader believed his friend could be saved, and with considerable effort their bodies were separated. Their bodies – but not their minds

Awakening in 1991 on a Decepticon-controlled Ark heading for Earth, and realising that he and Megatron were now one, Ratchet made a third attempt to end the savage circle and caused Starscream to ignite the tanks of Nucleon responsible for their revival. The starship spiralled out of control and crashed But thanks to that same Nucleon and perhaps cruel fate, the Autobot was cheated yet again Both he and Megatron lived, and the war continued.

Chapter Seven

As the Autobots enormous black twin-domed assault shuttles sped through hyperspace toward the Crab Nebula and the antimatter black hole at Chaos Point, Gears continued his analysis of Ratchet s circuits

"Whoever did this knew exactly what they were doing," he said admiringly as technical schematics flashed up on the screen. "But their motives remain shrouded in mystery. I've always said the universe was sick and twisted Now it seems that even in interdimensional space there are beings who get their kicks from doing experiments on sentient mechanoids "

Prowl and Trailbreaker proceeded to discuss strategy "In the vicinity of a black hole time slows down," pointed out the master of force-fields. "This is to our advantage When Megatron arrives and enters the gravitational field, his head-start on us will disappear We should find ourselves there in plenty of time to stop him "

"Very well," nodded Prowl approvingly "We'll hit them hard and fast – dock and board the Decepticons' warship, make our way to the main generators and detonate them, ending the threat of Megatron forever "

"It looks good on paper," mumbled Gears pessimistically "But nothing like this ever goes according to plan "

This time the Decepticons were ready for them Getting to the engine core was not going to be easy

"Where's Megatron?" yelled Prowl as the Autobots took cover behind a bulkhead to avoid being blown to pieces by mortar fire from Buzzsaw and Bombshell. They were on board the enemy cruiser but now that both sides were affected by the time dilation of the black hole their advantage was gone and the clock was ticking.

"Ticking?" Brawn looked around, puzzled. "Splinter grenade!" The Autobots dived for cover as Shrapnel's shell exploded, and were only saved from being shredded by metal splinters thanks to Windcharger's quick reflexes in activating a repulsive magnetic field.

"I hate those things," grimaced Prowl. "Time to power up the old force-field barrier, think, Trailbreaker."

Ratchet's voice came over Prowl's internal communicator. *"It's a diversion! Megatron's heading for the docking bay. He's going to leave the ship and enter the event horizon!"*

"Brawn, you're with me," decided Prowl. "We hold him long enough for the rest of you to do what needs to be done."

Megatron flew into the air as Prowl's old Action-Master Turbo Cycle rammed squarely into his back. The Autobots Chief Military Strategist leapt off and the vehicle converted to its gun emplacement mode and began pelting the Decepticon Leader with heavy firepower.

Megatron covered his face with his left arm while taking aim with his right and using his fusion cannon to blast the Autobot machine out of existence before he could move on to eliminate the Turbo Cycle's owner, however Brawn tackled him from the side and brought them both crashing to the deck. Megatron's primary weapon became dislodged from his arm and skidded out of reach.

Brawn pummelled the Decepticon with a quick one-two and then sprang away as Prowl somersaulted over them, landed on one knee and fired a burst from his acid-pellet rifle into the tyrant's body armour. If they could just keep him off-balance for a few minutes longer...

"Fools," screamed Megatron as Brawn knocked him flying with an iron girder directly into the path of Prowl's shoulder-mounted wire-guided missiles. "This is my domain. Here I am the master." With that he concentrated, and antimatter began to swirl around him, causing minor explosions whenever it came into contact with the ship but doing no harm whatsoever to Megatron himself.

"Fall back," cried Prowl as the Decepticon began lobbing antimatter at them with abandon. "It's too late! He's already established contact." Through the open bay doors the two Autobots could see writhing tendrils of dark antimatter reaching out of the black hole in answer to their master's summons. The matter from the companion star which normally spiralled in to annihilate with antimatter beyond the event horizon now exploded right beneath them, and the ship shook with the force of the eruption.

From his vantage point on the bridge of the lead Autobot assault shuttle, Ratchet watched Megatron leave his ship and descend towards the black hole and the horrors that lay beyond it. Antimatter cleared the way before him, creating a passage of gravitational calm as he entered his seat of cosmic power.

Ratchet knew what he had to do. Taking an emergency hand-held rocket he opened the airlock and leapt into space, following Megatron down into the jaws of oblivion.

Chapter Eight

The closing weeks of the year 2005

Ironhide, still conscious, crawled forward and clutched desperately at Megatron's leg.

"Such heroic nonsense," sneered the Decepticon Leader. He aimed his fusion cannon at the security officer's head and fired.

It had all gone horribly wrong for the Autobots. Their strategists knew that a Decepticon attack on Autobot City Earth was imminent, and desired to bolster their command structure on Earth in preparation for the onslaught. But, with warp gate disruption fields in operation, Prowl and Ratchet had to travel the old-fashioned way. In order not to arouse the enemy's suspicions they allowed Laserbeak to infiltrate Moonbase One and overhear Optimus Prime assign Ironhide a solo shuttle mission to Earth. Surely the Decepticons would never attack a ship with an empty hold on its way to pick up energy supplies!

They had no way of knowing that a shuttle on a cargo run was precisely what Megatron needed to launch his surprise assault, and encountering such high-ranking officers on board was a bonus for the Decepticon Leader. Though expecting to find Ironhide alone, he had with him sufficient troops to lay siege to a city, more than enough to handle the crew of four. As Skywarp and Thundercracker assumed pilot positions and Starscream made some ill-informed observations, Ironhide launched a desperate attempt to destroy Megatron and paid the ultimate price.

Soundwave stopped Mixmaster as he moved to melt down Brawn and Prowl with Devastator's solar energy rifle. "Put these two in the cargo hold," he instructed. "There may be much to be gained from dissecting the strategist's logic processor and the demolition robot's alloy-reinforcing nanotechnology."

"Surely we can terminate this one!" pleaded Blitzwing, standing over Ratchet's disabled body. Soundwave nodded. The joyous Constructicons moved to observe the agonising execution, only to find Megatron interpose his massive form between his troops and their intended victim.

"No. Put him with the others. He too may prove useful when the city has fallen. Hook may be injured in the battle, and then who would tend to our wounded?"

"I'd have thought you of all people would want to see Ratchet dead," sneered Starscream. "After all the times this surgeon has defeated you." He never finished his sentence, as Megatron punched him so hard that he flew across the shuttle and embedded himself in the far wall.

"Does anyone else have any views they'd like to share?" he asked. The silence was deafening. "Good. You will have plenty of opportunity to terminate Autobots when we reach our destination. In the meantime, the pilot's remains are yours to do with as you see fit."

In fact, the Decepticons lost possession of the shuttle during the battle for the city, and the other Autobots were able to retrieve and eventually restore Brawn, Prowl and Ratchet to active duty.

Ratchet never told anyone how he too had remained conscious long enough to hear the Decepticons' conversation. Unlike Ironhide he had decided against a suicidal attempt on Megatron's person – not because he wasn't into that sort of thing, but because he preferred to sacrifice himself when he actually stood a good chance of taking the enemy with him. If he had known why Megatron had spared his life that day, he might well have acted differently.

Chapter Nine

"HELLO? WHAT? NO, I'M IN A BATTLE ***SAID*** I'M IN A ***BATTLE!*** NO, IT'S RUBBISH! THESE AUTOBOTS ARE REAL WIMPS WHAT? ***WHAT?*** NO PUT SOME OINTMENT ON IT! LOOK, I'LL HAVE TO CALL YOU BACK LATER WHAT? YEAH YEAH C'AOWWWW!!!"

This last came when Cliffjumper sprayed Bombshell's arm with glass-gas and shattered it with a flying kick. Cliffjumper hated mobile phones.

The battle was going as well as could be expected, but it was going well too slowly. The valiant Gears had been knocked out by a powerful strike from Kickback in his giant grasshopper configuration, and while Inferno's heat-resistant body was able to withstand Ravage's fire-breath so as to enable him to rescue Windcharger from the black cat's clutches, the Decepticon saboteur's ability to negate Windcharger's magnetic fields had allowed him to take out the Autobots most powerful fighting asset. Trailbreaker's force-field had held off Shrapnel's electric assaults long enough for him to put the Insecticon down with a well-placed wrist-rocket, and Cliffjumper had managed to glass-gas Scrapper and thus remove him from the fight, but at this rate it would be some time before any of them made it to the ship's main generator.

As Inferno was knocked off his feet by Rumble, and Cliffjumper transformed to hovercar mode to escape a diving attack by Buzzsaw, the small Autobot warrior acknowledged that it might already be too late.

In the surreal environment of the anti-matter realm, Megatron mustered his forces. Shapes without form pulsated before him – ancient engines of destruction ready, willing and able to devastate any planet allied against the Decepticons, anti-matter demons trapped here by Primus and his kind close to the dawn of time. Thanks to the gifts of the nanobots, Megatron had the key to their prison. It was within his power to unleash them all on the matter universe. The thrill of anticipation of what he was about to do was intoxicating.

"Aren't you forgetting something?" came a voice from his nightmares. Megatron spun. Floating some way behind him was his arch-nemesis, an Autobot who had inflicted defeats on him far more humiliating than anything the Primes could dish out, for he was but a humble doctor.

"Ratchet!"

"Miss me?"

Megatron looked seriously worried. His plan had been to capture the Autobot surgeon and put him somewhere safe where he could do no-one any harm, least of all himself. And yet here he was, walking into the lion's den, where the touch of a single anti-matter tendril could disintegrate him in an instant.

"Relax." Ratchet told him. "Don't you think that if your survival really depended on mine I would have already killed myself by now?"

Could it be true? Were Megatron's fears unfounded? Ratchet's record in the self-sacrifice department did lend credence to his words. But this was wonderful news!

"In that case you've signed your own death warrant by coming here, Autobot!" gloated the triumphant Decepticon. "Annihilate him!"

The anti-matter moved in towards the Autobot surgeon, then hesitated.

"What are you waiting for? I am your master! Destroy him now!"

Ratchet waved a cautioning finger at him. "Uh-uh, Megatron old playmate. We share minds, remember. Your cerebrum contains an artificial wormhole and nanobots which can control anti-matter, and now so does mine."

The lotha tentacles changed course and converged on the Decepticon leader.

"No! I am Megatron! I am power incarnate! This is *my* realm, and my will reigns supreme!" He raised his arms and retaliated with all his strength. And so the final battle was joined.

Chapter Ten

A stream of acid pellets knocked Kickback's machine-gun out of his grasp before he could draw a bead on Inferno.

"Autobots, disengage!" ordered Prowl. "Abort the mission!" Entering alongside him, Brawn felled Rumble with a right hook and slung Gears and Windcharger over his broad shoulders.

Elsewhere on board, Frenzy was punching in codes that would raise the Decepticon warship to a higher, safer orbit. The explosions in the accretion disc of the black hole were increasing in frequency and intensity. The Autobots only just made it back to their assault shuttles in time to follow suit and avoid being incinerated.

"The black hole's decaying," reported Trailbreaker, hurriedly taking up position at a science console. "The wormhole to the anti-matter universe has emerged from the event horizon."

"Where's Ratchet?" wondered Cliffjumper.

On the viewscreen, the dying wormhole spat out a lone figure and then vanished forever in a burst of anti-matter annihilation.

"Zoom in," instructed Prowl.

It was Megatron.

Megatron roared his fury as his dark minions fell back into the singularity, their power lost to him for all time. The forces unleashed by the struggle for supremacy had been too much for the delicate balance of the ancient prison.

But at least he had taken his revenge. He turned in space to face the Autobot vessels and waved his trophy at them – the barely recognisable skeletal remains of Chief Medical Officer Ratchet, shattered and scorched beyond all hope of reanimation. With a ferocity born of deep hatred, Megatron hurled the blackened frame into the infinite gravity well. The circle had been broken. Ratchet was dead.

Prowl buried his head in his hands.

"The black hole continues to decay," prompted Trailbreaker. "Massive energy discharge from the accretion disc in thirty seconds. Orders?"

Cliffjumper put a hand on Prowl's shoulder. "He destroyed Megatron's power base and saved the Galaxy from the threat of invasion by antimatter hordes," he told his commander gently.

Still Prowl would not speak. Inferno moved to the pilot console. "I'm setting a course to enter hyperspace. Brawn's doing the same on his shuttle. We're going home."

As the Decepticon warship also jumped to hyperspace, heading back to base, Megatron entered the cargo bay where the bulk of the fighting had taken place.

"You're hurt," he observed upon seeing Bombshell.

"I'm sorry, Commander," begged the one-armed Insecticon. "It wasn't my fault. I was distracted. It won't happen again. I swear."

But Megatron wasn't listening. Instead, he crouched down beside the wounded mechanoid, gathered up the remains of his shattered limb and set to work repairing the damage with a surgical dexterity that none of them had been aware he possessed.

"You break it, I'll remake it," he murmured.

Epilogue

Nexus Zero, stronghold of the Vok

"The doorway between the matter and antimatter universes has at last been sealed. The danger has passed."

"However, this union of two Transformer life-forces into one being has proven even more powerful than Project Tigerhawk."

"His destiny is uncertain. We cannot control him directly. The two souls that have merged here are unlike those of the Maximals - they appear inclined to choose opposing paths."

"Which side will emerge dominant cannot be predicted. We will have to observe him further."

Allegiance: Autobot
Sub-groups: Triple Changer, *Ark* crew, secret projects unit
Function: Chief Medical Officer

"You break it, I'll remake it."

History: As with Inferno, Ratchet's function didn't change when war broke out, just his workload. He had been a friend to the Autobot who would become Optimus Prime long before that, and was training him to be a doctor when Orion found himself more needed in other areas - as a warrior and a leader. But their friendship did not waver, and Optimus appointed Ratchet to be his Chief Medical Officer when he gained command of the Autobot army. Soon after the 1984 revival, Ratchet found himself too required to put down the tools of healing and become a warrior, when every other Autobot was defeated and imprisoned by Shockwave.

At the urging of the decapitated Optimus Prime, Ratchet put aside his grief and confronted Megatron. He located and revived the Dinobots, but they proved no match for the Decepticon, so in a moment of extreme bravery Ratchet attempted to take them both over a cliff. In the end his sacrifice proved unnecessary, but it was a defining moment in the Autobot surgeon's life, and the truly heroic Autobot - all the more so considering he was not a warrior by vocation - went on to do great deeds. Like Prowl he visited Limbo in 1986, and soon after the loss of Optimus Prime the following year had to save the Autobots from the vengeful human known as the Mechanic. He came close to despair in 1989 when faced with the vast numbers of wounded Autobots following the Underbase fiasco, but managed to out-think Megatron once again and restore Bumblebee, Jazz and Grimlock as Pretenders before once more trying to kill the Decepticon at the cost of his own life by blowing up his base on Cybertron.

The pair ended up stranded in interdimensional space bonded together supposedly by the explosion, until Optimus Prime retrieved and separated them in 1990 with the aid of Nightbeat. In 1991 Ratchet awoke soaked in Nucleon and on board a Decepticon-controlled *Ark* heading for Earth. In an attempt to take out Megatron, Galvatron, Shockwave and Starscream he caused the *Ark* to crash but once again failed in his self-sacrifice. All aboard recovered, partially due to the Nucleon and since then Ratchet has taken a rather ironic view of his own life. He wasn't afraid of death when the shuttle he was on was boarded by Decepticons in 2005, knowing that after all his attempts to do the job himself the universe wouldn't let him off that easily, and indeed he and most of his crew were returned to active duty in 2010. Ratchet doesn't have a death wish - he enjoys life, and relishes it all the more for his many reprieves - but he's proved many times that he is not afraid to sacrifice himself for the greater good should circumstances demand it. He is a very kind, very brave machine, the epitome of what every Autobot should aspire to.

Since 1989, Ratchet's superior officers have always made sure he had access to a fully equipped medical bay with a staff of fellow doctors to serve under him, and since the construction of Autobot City: Earth he has had no cause to complain. With the likes of First Aid, Fixit and Hoist to rely upon he can find plenty of time for research on the nanobots and other extraordinary phenomena.

Abilities: Ratchet has an assortment of laser scalpels, arc-welders, electron microscopes, electrical circuit sensors and fluid dispensers (both lubricating and super-cooled) at his disposal. He is a Triple Changer, retaining his old Cybertronian form in addition to his humanoid configuration. This extra mode consists of a smaller, more alien-looking robot attached to a MARB (Mobile Autobot Repair Bay), and is more suited to repairs in the field than his full upright mode. Following his many skirmishes with Megatron the MARB also has a missile-launching capability, though he has yet to use it in anger. His vehicle mode is now a slightly updated Cybertronian version of his 20th Century ambulance configuration with improved speed and manoeuvrability.

Allegiance: Decepticon
Sub-group: *Nemesis* crew
Function: Decepticon Leader 4,000 000 BC-3 998,000 BC (Cybertron), 1984-1985 (Earth), 1986-1987 (Earth), 1993-1996 (Earth), 1996-2005 (Cybertron and Earth)

"Peace through tyranny."

History: Chief gladiator of Tarn, the city-state ruled by Shockwave, Megatron built up a huge following on Cybertron by appealing to the citizens' bloodlust with the sheer savagery of his attacks. War broke out between Tarn and Vos when Starscream, figurehead of the controlling dictators of the latter city-state, blew up a Tarn fuel depot and failed in an attempt to blame the sabotage on Iacon. Tarn and Vos wiped each other out with photon missiles, and Megatron united the survivors under his new banner. They wanted someone to blame for the destruction of their city-states, and Megatron provided that outlet by declaring that the Iaconians and those like them were responsible. He also provided the vision that turned Cybertronians into Transformers. The nucleus of this faction – Megatron, Shockwave and Soundwave – went underground, secretly adding to their might in numbers and weaponry. Each new member swore allegiance to the cause of tyranny and terror, exchanging their Autobot badges for the divided insignia of the Decepticons.

At first, other Cybertronians saw the Decepticons as harmless and ignored the serpent that was growing in their midst. By the time concern over these renegade Transformers was given voice, it was too late. Megatron had amassed a mighty army, bent on conquest. As soon as the time was adjudged to be propitious, Megatron and the Decepticons struck – capturing and/or destroying each of the Autobot city-states. A huge web of Decepticon-controlled areas soon formed around the largest city-state (and seat of the Autobot government) – Iacon. Megatron knew that once Iacon was in his possession, he would control all of Cybertron.

Megatron decided that once Cybertron was under Decepticon rule, he would transform the entire planet into one vast cosmic dreadnought, with which he would conquer the universe. To this end, he constructed a prototype planetary drive under the city-state of Kaon. He fired this once, and as a result Cybertron was shaken loose from its orbit and sent hurtling through space. But Megatron's plans were forestalled by the emergence of Optimus Prime as Autobot leader. Prime melded the remains of his army into a fully effective fighting force and began slowly but surely to halt the Decepticon advance. The war raged on for another thousand years, until both Megatron and Optimus Prime found themselves (together with a number from each's army) deactivated, stranded on a barren planet that would one day become known to its inhabitants as Earth. Megatron's battle against the Autobots resumed with new vigour when the two factions were revived. He knew that if he could master the boundless energy to be found on Earth, he could return to Cybertron and conquer it once and for all.

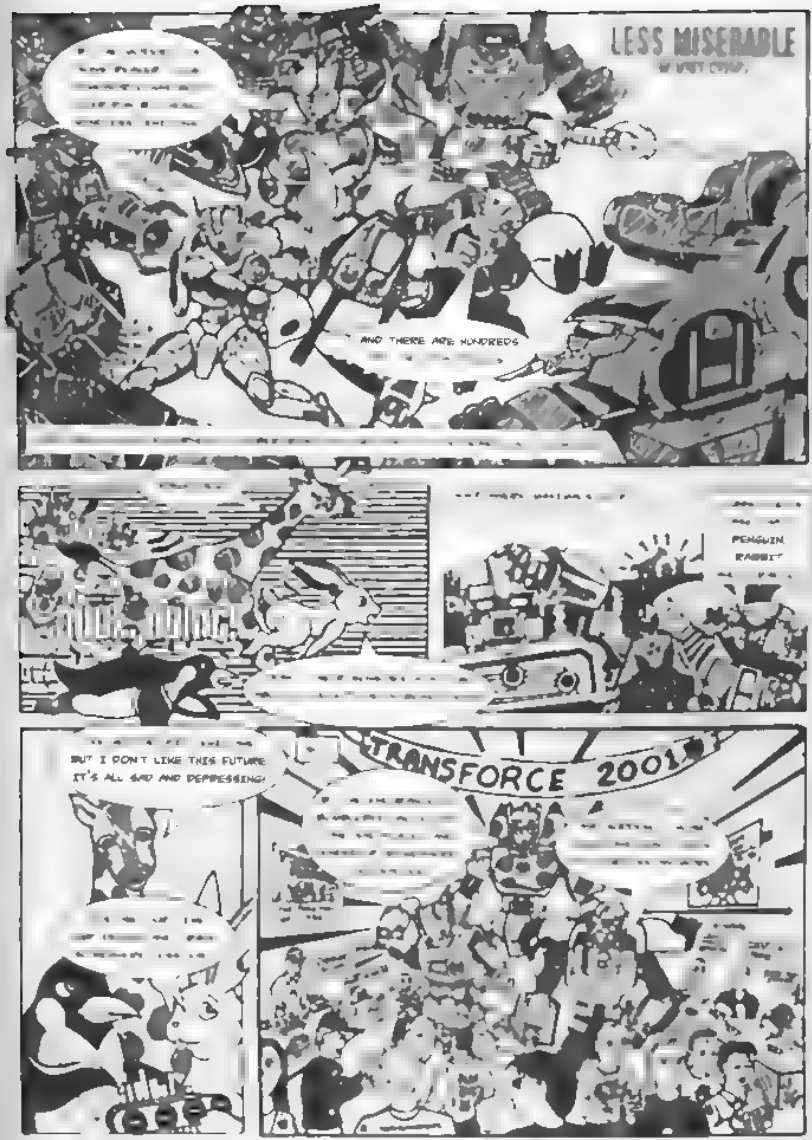
When Megatron's schemes almost cost the Decepticons their lives, his command was usurped by his own Military Operations Officer, Shockwave. After a period of rule by Shockwave, Megatron regained his command, but then shortly after Optimus Prime's death in 1987 he blew up the Space Bridge while standing on it, and was believed to have been destroyed.

Megatron found himself in the Dead End region of Polyhex on Cybertron. Eventually his wounds healed, and in 1989 he revealed himself to the Autobot Ratchet, whom he had captured. A clone of Megatron instilled with the subconscious mind of Straxus had been active on Earth during this period, fighting alongside Galvatron in the Time Wars, but on his return to Cybertron he was destroyed by the real Megatron. Ratchet and Megatron were both hurled into interdimensional space when the Decepticon's Cybertronian fortress base exploded.

In 1990 both Megatron and Ratchet were retrieved, though it would take some time for their personalities to separate as they had been fused together by the explosion (or some other unknown power). In 1991 the *Ark* crashed for a second time on Earth. Megatron's body was recovered by Bludgeon and revived using new Nucleon. Megatron reassumed his role as leader to a certain extent during the Earthforce Wars of 1992-1993, but it wasn't until he gained his new tank battle armour from Cobra that he firmly cemented his leadership. In a matter of years he became undisputed commander of a Decepticons on Earth, the *Warworld* and Cybertron, which was itself once more under Decepticon control following the siege Maximo's defeat in late 1996. In 2005 Unicron abducted Megatron and transformed him into Galvatron, but after several centuries in this form Megatron returned once more to play his part in the final decades of the Great War.

Abilities: Megatron is incredibly powerful and intelligent, the equal of Autobot Leader Optimus Prime. His fusion cannon can convert any small amount of matter into large quantities of explosive nuclear energy. The cannon can fire a blast up to 12 miles and release enough energy to flatten a small town. Megatron can use alien nanotechnology in his internal circuitry to connect the cannon interdimensionally with a black hole in space, where it can draw on anti-matter as its power source. The blast from this is far greater, but it creates a tremendous strain on Megatron to do this for even one shot. His full antimatter control capability has yet to be realised. In addition, he has a free-standing particle cannon made from enlarging the silencer and arm-rest sections of his Walther P-38 pistol mode, and can exchange his right hand for an energy ball-and-chain weapon.

In 1993 Megatron gained an outer shell that covers all of him except his head. While inside this armour he can transform into a battle tank, and has the use of a powerful rail gun. He can also now use his internal circuitry to excite electrons and implode neutrons in spectacular fashion, though here he must rely on his battle armour to protect himself from his own blast. Megatron also has a much larger untested Neutro-Fusion Tank, a high-impact battle tank armed with fusion cannon, corrosive smoke shells, anti-aircraft photon machine-guns and heat-seeking mechano-sensors. The tank converts into a ground-to-air, wire-guided missile launcher and search-and-destroy jet throne.


LESS MISERABLE
AND THERE ARE HUNDREDS
PENGUIN RABBIT
BUT I DON'T LIKE THIS FUTURE IT'S ALL SAD AND DEPRESSING!
TRANSFORCE 2001

AM THE FIRST LINE OF DEFENCE
FOR CYBERTRONS BLOCKADE

A LONG TIME AGO I WAS BURIED BY A VOLCANIC ERUPTION WHILST
TRYING TO END THE THREAT OF THE DECEPTICON GALVATRON.
AS BURIED ALIVE BUT DO NOT KILL HIM

THE VISIONS STARTED AFTER WAS RELEASED FROM MY VOLCANIC TOMB. INTENSIFYING OF AN ENCOUNTER WITH XENON.
MOMENTS OF INTENSE PAIN FOLLOWED WITH MOMENTS OF EUPHORIA WHERE COULD SEE THE MAJESTY OF THE UNIVERSE

IT TOOK ME YEARS TO REALISE THAT THE VISIONS WERE NOT A CURSE BUT WERE TRYING TO TELL ME SOMETHING

I WANT CYBERTRON! WHY DOES IT STILL ELUDE ME?

THE AUTOBOTS HAVE CYBERFORMED THOUSANDS OF BARREN MOONS AND ASTEROIDS AND POSITIONED THEM IN A BLOCKADE AROUND IT. SUCH A MOVE HAS MADE IT NEAR IMPOSSIBLE TO ATTACK CYBERTRON.

I NEED AN ARMY TO PILOT MY WARWORLDS AND CONQUER THE UNIVERSE! I MUST HAVE THE PIT

WE MUST BE PATIENT

NO! WE WILL FORCE THE ISSUE

THE DECEPTICON TRAITOR REQUESTS TO SEE YOU.

WHAT IS IT YOU HAVE FOR ME?

YOU ARE FREE TO GO. NO-ONE WILL HEAR OF WHAT JUST TRANSPIRED

WAS THAT WISE?

HE IS BROKEN. LIKE THE DECEPTICON ARMY

NEED TO BE ALONE

BUT NOW...

THE VEHICLES ARE GETTING STRONGER! THERE IS SOMETHING I CAN'T MAKE OUT IN THE DISTANCE... SOMETHING BIG

THIS IS OUR LATEST INTELLIGENCE THE DECEPTICONS ARE BUILDING A FLEET OF WARWORLDS.

SO WHAT WE GOTTA DO?

THEIR FLEET IS NOT FULLY ASSEMBLED. WE STRIKE NOW.

AT THE HEART OF THE WARWORLD FACTORY GALVATRON'S CYBERWORLD

HOW DID WE FIND OUT?

UNKNOWN. WE HAVE A TRAITOR

I HAVE DISABLED THEIR LONG RANGE COMMUNICATIONS. THERE WILL BE NO REINFORCEMENTS

LONG RANGE COMMUNICATIONS ARE OFF-LINE

HAVE SENT REWIND AND ELECT TO INFORM OPTIMUS PRIME OF OUR ACTIONS.

WE VEGUS HAVE GETTING STRANGE MESSAGES. WHAT ARE THEY TRYING TO TELL ME?

THEY ARE STILL BLURRY JUST OUT OF REACH

I WANT US PREPARED - WE ARE ON RED ALERT

TERMINATE THEM ALL AND LEAVE MAGNUS TO ME!

RELENTLESS

TRANSMASTERS UK PRESENTS ULTRA MAGNUS IN "RELENTLESS" SCRIPT, ARTWORK AND LETTERS GARRY BODSWORTH

WARWORLDS DESTROY THE AUTOBOT FLEET IN HIGH ORBIT

SLAYERS, ENGAGE THE SHIPS THAT HAVE PENETRATED THE ATMOSPHERE

SWOOP TAKE US IN LOW TO THE CITADEL

ME NOT LIKE THIS, IT TOO QUIET

I AGREE IT IS LIKE THEY INVITING US IN.

THEY HAVE ENTERED SECTION 3

OPERATION: WARFARE ENGAGE

TAKE OUT GAL YATRON NOW!!!

GALVATRON, THIS ALL ENDS NOW!

I DID NOT EXPECT YOU TO BE QUITE SO DECISIVE

TOO MANY TRANSFORMERS HAVE DIED AT YOUR HAND TOO MANY ARE DYING NOW. I WILL STOP YOU BUTCHERING MY RACE!

YOU AUTOBOTS ARE PATHETIC SO NOBLE SO BLIND

TRANSFORMERS CAN RULE THE UNIVERSE!

YOU ARE NEXT!!!

LOOK AT THOSE WARWORLDS!

PEACE IS FOR THOSE TOO WEAK TO WIN!

SO WHAT'S THE PLAN?

THAT WON'T HELP YOU

IT IS TIME TO TAKE CONTROL

FALL BACK TO THE SALVATION

DECEPTICONS! FALL BACK TO THE WARWORLD!

DO IT

WHY? THEY ARE RUNNING!

I CHANNEL MY PAIN IT IS NOTHING COMPARED TO THE SUFFERING OF MY RACE

SWOOP TAKE US INTO HIGH ORBIT

SO WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO, GRIMLOCK?

WE WAIT FOR AUTOBOTS SOS THEN WE NUKE THIS PLACE OUTTA EXISTENCE

YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY WIN!

PLANETARY SELF-DESTRUCT HAS BEEN ACTIVATED I HOPE YOU HAVE A WAY TO ESCAPE

I WOULD WORRY ABOUT YOURSELF

PREPARE FOR JUSTICE

GRIMLOCK, FIRE NOW!

"NOT NOW..."

YOU ARE PATHETIC! YOU ARE LESS THAN NOTHING!

"MUST FIGHT THE VISIONS..."

SUCH A FEEBLE ACT.

YOU.

ME.

SO THIS IS IT THEN, OLD FOE?

NOT QUITE.

REMEMBER THIS MOMENT.

EXIT

THE END?

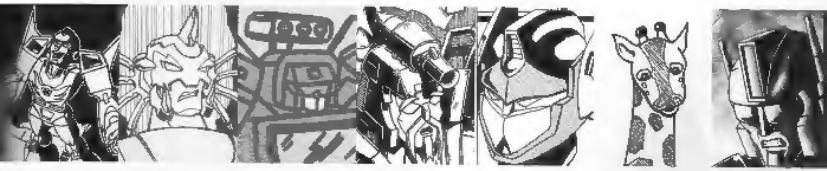
we all need someone to get there

To be honest, this magazine simply wouldn't have been possible if not for the tremendous amount of work put in by the artists. Jack, Nick, Matt, James and Garry: thank you for spending so much of your free time over the last few months on this project. I'm not alone when I say it's your best work to date! Martin, Garry, James and Mark have come up with some great plots too. Me? Oh, I'm just a fanboy and wanted to see some *Beast Machines* and *Car Robots* characters see some action(!) But, hey, at least the lettering looks not too shabby!

As well as laying on a great convention for the fans, Paul Cannon and Paul Wright deserve a special mention for agreeing to my "64-page vision" and footing the bill! Thanks guys, I hope we can do it again next year!

Most of all, though, I owe a huge debt of gratitude to my partner-in-crime, Garry Bodsworth who has given me a considerable amount of support over the last few months, and without whom, this magazine (and "Alignment" for that matter) would never have got printed!

Ευχαριστώ Garry Bodsworth, Jack Lawrence, Theo Bain, Paul Wright, Paul Cannon, Rose Thomson and Colin Lake.



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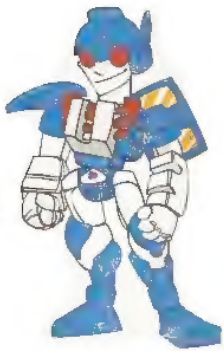
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